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## American's Help Called Key To Libyans' Move Into Chad

The following article is based on reporting by Philip Taubman, Jeff C. and Edward T. Pound, and was written by Mr. Taubman.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 31 — Libya would have had difficulty sustaining its intervention in Chad last year without the support of a former American intelligence agent, according to pilots and technicians who recently returned from Libya.

They said that the Western personnel and materiel that the intelligence agent, Edwin P. Wilson, supplied were indispensable to the Libyan military.

These sources confirmed accounts published last week that Americans are flying and maintaining Libyan Air Force aircraft, including helicopters bearing Libyan Air Force insignia, that were used by the Libyans in the intervention in Chad.

"If the Americans left, within six months not one Chinook helicopter would be flying," said Michael D. Bedwell, a former Army pilot who returned Oct. 8 from Libya, where he worked for Mr. Wilson. Mr. Bedwell would not elaborate on his experiences in Libya, but other Americans and Britons agreed with his judgment and provided considerable detail about Mr. Wilson's role and that of the Western airmen.

The Libyan Air Force has a fleet of 20 CH-47 Chinook helicopters, an advanced cargo aircraft designed in the United States and manufactured in Italy.

Last week, a State Department spokesman said that there were no indications that Americans were involved with the Libyan Air Force. He added, without elaboration, that the department had received unconfirmed reports that Americans, working for a civilian charter airline in Libya, might have taken part in airlifts to resupply Libyan troops in Chad.

The spokesman, Alan Romberg, then added, "We believe it is totally inappropriate for any U.S. citizen to take any action which helps Qaddafi carry out such illegal activities as the occupation of Chad." He was referring to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, the leader of the militant Arab nation in North Africa.

Government spokesmen would not expand on Mr. Romberg's statement this week, even after they were provided with new evidence of military activities by Americans in Libya.

### Flew Cargo Planes into Chad

John Anthony Stubbs, a British who worked for Mr. Wilson in Libya earlier this year, said in an interview this week that he had piloted C-130 Hercules airplanes on dozens of missions to advance bases in Southern Libya, resupplying Libyan troops and aircraft operating in Chad.

Senior American intelligence officials said that Libya, which has purchased a large arsenal of weapons and military equipment from the Soviet Union and Western nations, has a severe shortage of trained personnel. Without Soviet advisers and forces, supplemented by pilots and technicians recruited in the West, they said, Libya's military forces would be immobilized.

Mr. Wilson, by providing outside help, has emerged as a pivotal figure in Libya, as an ex officio chief of procurement and recruitment for that nation's air force, according to the pilots and technicians. That, in effect, places Mr. Wilson, who was trained and employed by the Central Intelligence Agency for 15 years, near the nerve center of a Government considered a pariah state by the United States.

Mr. Wilson left American Government employ in 1976. He was indicted last year by a Federal grand jury here on charges of illegally shipping explosives to Libya. He was reindicted this month and is a fugitive living in Tripoli, the Libyan capital.

He has repeatedly refused to accept telephone calls to his office and home in Tripoli.

### 'Hitchman' Replies Profanely

Yesterday, however, a man answered his phone and identified himself as Robert Hitchman. Mr. Hitchman is Mr. Wilson's deputy. He threatened the reporter who called him and issued a stream of invectives and profanities.

He accused The New York Times of "printing lies" and called the reporters working on the story "whores."

"You Jewish [expletive] are trying to destroy the C.I.A.," he said.

Mr. Wilson's work for Libya, which began in 1976 when he and another former agency employee, Frank E. Terpil, signed a contract to sell their expertise

in a "clean room," a sterile, soundproof chamber that has a variety of uses, including assembly of both conventional and nuclear weapons. Libya does not currently possess nuclear weapons or the ability to make them, according to American intelligence officials, but may be using the room for computers or the assembly of conventional warheads.

Employment of British pilots and mechanics to fly and maintain Libyan-owned C-130 Hercules cargo planes. These planes served as the backbone for resupply of troops and materiel in Libya's military intervention in Chad, which began late last year.

Recruitment of American oil technicians and procurement of oilfield equipment, important to the development of Libyan oil resources, the main source of revenue for the Libyan Government. Mr. Wilson's work, which was done directly for the Libyan state oil company, supplemented similar activities of American oil companies that operate Libyan oil fields.

### Recruiting May Not Violate Law

The recruitment of American pilots and technicians would not appear to violate Federal laws, according to Justice Department officials. They said that it was illegal for Americans to enlist in the military forces of a foreign government, but that Mr. Wilson's operation would not be covered by the laws because the Americans working in Libya were recruited and paid by a Swiss company controlled by Mr. Wilson.

The American authorities said that some other facets of Mr. Wilson's work for Libya, including the efforts to obtain spare parts, would be illegal because of a Government ban on the export of American aircraft and spare parts to Libya. Recent associates of Mr. Wilson said that the effort to obtain spare parts involved plans to disguise their final destination by making the purchase appear to be for nations permitted to acquire parts.

A Federal grand jury here is continuing its investigation.

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